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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the personal and professional changes that took place for a teacher who taught English in two Washington State prisons. A gradual change in teacher behavior and authority resulted from a self-examination of the role of teacher in this special teaching environment; the teacher found she could learn from the students as well as teach them. Comments and perceptions by other teachers are included. The corrections students are described, and the particular challenges and characteristics of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in this population is examined, including the special challenges regarding professional versus institutional authority and security. Appendixes include the history of prison education, a prison teacher questionnaire, and the Washington State core competencies questionnaire. (Contains 35 references.) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (NAV)

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TEACHERS' ROLES IN THE CLASSROOM: ADOPTING AND ADAPTING TO THE PARADOX OF EDUCATION WITHIN A PRISON INSTITUTION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the
School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

Elizabeth Gail Paup
B.A. Whitman College 1989

May 1995

C Elizabeth Gail Paup 1995

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Date: May 30, 1995

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract: This paper explores the personal and professional changes that took place for me as a teacher in two Washington state prisons. A gradual change in teacher behavior and authority resulted from a re-examination of my role as teacher in the prison institution. In addition, the paper explores other corrections teachers' comments and perceptions about their work. This gives the reader a background for my primary investigation of student-teacher interaction in this special setting. Corrections students are described and a section of the paper illustrates the particular challenges and characteristics of English as a Second Language populations and their classes. This paper hopes to inform new and prospective corrections educators, educators outside a corrections environment and experience, as well as to inform corrections educators who seek more training, insight and information concerning their profession and the prison as institution.

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INTRODUCTION

"A teaching position in corrections," it is said in the back of one's mind or perhaps by a colleague, "will be difficult." The voice that warns continues: "Many students are those who did not finish high school, they are often from cultures and backgrounds far removed from you, the teacher. They have committed crimes in society, they have low self esteem, and they often have more challenging behaviors and learning styles than students on regular college campuses. The men and women in prison are not *normal*," the voice says, "nor are they living in a normal environment."

"In addition to the challenge of having such different and needy students, a potential conflict may also exist between prison or education administrators' views and your views of the purpose of education in the prison. A supervisor may ask you to 'baby-sit' a keyboarding class. Seeing the education of the students in a devalued way such as 'seat time' may disenchant, or serve to devalue your personal education philosophy."

"As a new corrections teacher, do not expect specialized training regarding how to interact with these inmates as a service provider. You will receive training on defensive techniques (hair holds, emergency 'behavior management,' and security procedures), but you would be more fortunate to have the opportunity to observe and apprentice with a senior corrections teacher, before jumping in to your own classrooms. And finally, there is the physical and psychological isolation from other education professionals and institutions. As a corrections teacher, you may work far from any city library, resources, or college campus. This separation may have the secondary effects of making this work environment a sort of prison for you as well."

"Why," I have been asked by my students, colleagues, and my graduate school professor in disbelief, sarcasm and with a touch of humor *"would you* work in corrections?!" This question reflects the public's lack experience in a prison teaching situation. It may also reflect an inner voice of corrections' teachers who are doubting their own purposes and abilities to teach inmates.

If a new teacher pays attention to only these preceding statements of limitations -- the barbed fences of the prison -- the teacher's ability to teach will then be limited. He or she will soon be embittered about the job, or even dissuaded from this field in the first place. Teacher fulfillment and success ultimately depend on how the individual teacher in the corrections education program handles and perceives these challenges. As a teacher in minimum and maximum facilities for four years, and as an investigator and practitioner of corrections teachers' coping methods, conditions, and concerns, I have found that it really depends on *the individual* teacher's experience and attitude; these conditions can be perceived as insurmountable and in conflict with the individual's teaching and professional mission, or these conditions can be mere signposts that the teacher will pass on a road to successful teaching and interaction with students.

Is it folly for an educator to work in corrections? Again, we must turn to the individual teacher in his or her setting. In this paper, I relate my teaching experience in prison and the experiences of other Washington state corrections teachers. I illustrate and explain the changes that I made as I passed the stages of the disbelieving and distant observer of my students, to the stages of the more involved, professional teacher who experimented with nontraditional techniques of authority. Although primarily concerned with the teachers' roles in general, I also describe the particular position and resulting challenges of ESL in

corrections education. It is through these accounts that the question is answered of whether or not working in a prison's education program is "folly."

Whatever the conceptions of inmates and education in the public's eyes, the conceptions usually do not reflect *what* we do as educators in prison nor what we as corrections educators perceive as our mission. They often reflect how we and our students are perceived by those outside our field. Only with observations, interviews and examinations of teachers inside their classrooms, can we gain a more accurate and fair picture of the students and the corrections teachers' particular challenges, conditions, and motivations. Also, the teacher's perceptions of his or her work area might change over time. This has been my experience.

As teachers in a prison classroom, we experience, like our prisoners, some of the effects of our particular confined environment. We are anomalies and often, the "little guy" on the totem pole, both inside the prison institution and in comparison with our sister college campuses. Although many of the students and teachers interviewed for this paper agreed that education is fundamentally the same both inside and outside the prison walls, all teachers interviewed gave examples of how they must personally and professionally adjust their classroom content, deliveries, and their attitudes, to their particular prison environment. Physically and socially, a prison classroom *is* different from an ESL classroom at a community college, a factory, or someone's basement.

Besides examining the coping and teaching tools that teachers use or do not use in their environments of the prison ESL classroom, I give the reader my personal account of professional change as a teacher. In chapters two and five I describe and graph how I traveled through the "continuum of behavior changes"; from a stage of not questioning the established codes of authority in the prison (I term this behavior as "institutional authority") to eventually questioning my role

as "teacher" within the structure and confines of the prison institution (I term this changed behavior as "professional authority"). This continuum can be applied to individuals who are risking any change in their accustomed behavior.

In chapter four of this paper, I look inside classrooms and illustrate the attitudes of other teaching staff in Washington state prisons: teachers perceptions of their work environment, their students, their challenges, and their recommendations for a new corrections teacher or staff member. In the appendix of this paper, I also briefly look at the past and present history of prison education. Questions concerning how the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom fits or does not fit these models are posed.

In addition to hearing from other corrections teachers as well as from the author, the following thematic questions and areas are raised for the reader and will be addressed in the paper:

1. AFFECTIVE REALM: How does the prison environment, change the teacher, students, and classroom relationships and dynamics? I examine different types of authority and its effects.

2. PRACTICAL REALM: What are some of the practical requirements of teaching in the prison environment?

3. ESL IN PRISON: Are ESL students anomalies in the prison? Given their different cultural backgrounds, can we deliver education to them in the same manner, derived from the same correctional education philosophies as we deliver to other students?

4. PRISON EDUCATION HISTORY: On what models are education programs based? (Appendix A)

Given the scant textual resources for teachers new to corrections, especially ESL teachers, this paper may provide useful information and guidance to the public and prospective teachers, as well as serves as a springboard for further study and discussion of these subjects. As one teacher wrote while researching a similar topic in 1984, "it appears that practitioners are dealing with practical problems in the institutions each day, without the benefit of learning from one another" (Edelson, 10).

> "The professor's first task is of convincing himself that the students are deserving of his or her sincere efforts." - L.O.*1

I was told that it wouldn't be easy to be a corrections educator. This has been true; however, I was never told how much I would learn from my particular teaching situation and from my students. Similarly, I was not told of how much I would grow personally, as a result of working with prisoners. I hope to partially amend this imbalance of information and teacher preparation with these writings and findings.

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*1 All non-italicized quotes using initials, come from my survey of corrections' education teachers in Washington state (Paup 1994c). Some respondents requested not to be identified. Quotes do not necessarily support my beliefs or writings; rather, they serve as an expression of other teachers in this field and as a reference point for the reader.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SECTION, PART I

"Understanding comes only through self-knowledge" [*2]

I first came to my interview at Olympic Corrections Center with some trepidation. There I was, twenty-four years of age, unaware of the prison world, and educated in Milton, Shakespeare, and Virginia Woolf. I had studied and worked with educated, usually white middle class people. I had mainly interacted with people like myself. At the interview for this new teaching position, I walked into a room with seven prison staff members present. The man posing the first questions wore immense black boots and he never smiled.

Later I would recall how this first interaction was similar to that experienced by "the chain," or new prisoners to the camp, upon their arrival to Olympic Corrections Center. The new prisoners meet this same group of people and have a similar welcome. I was grilled, questioned, and not a little bit intimidated. The interview consisted of a security test, which I happened to pass, by accident. "What would you do if an inmate[*3] asked you to take and mail a letter for him?" I was perplexed, but answered, "I would show him where he could mail it in the institution. I know they have mailboxes here." Maybe amazed at my lack of awareness concerning contraband and drug deliveries, my interview panelists sat there and stared at me -- almost with a look of warning. "I really need this ABE/ESL teaching job," I thought

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[*2] All italicized, unreferenced quotes in this paper are from Jiddu Krishnamurti.

[*3] I use the word "inmate" in this paper to refer to adults who are in the custody of a state prison for having committed a felony-level crime.

to myself. Finally they said, "you're hired." *But watch it,* they really seemed to be saying.

More worried about my safety and security that I did or did not acquire, the prison staff's concern about me exacerbated my own growing concern about myself in this new job. I wondered, "How will I act with the students? How will they perceive me? How can I protect myself? How can I maintain distance between the students and me?" All of these questions resulted in putting me in a "state." That is, I was more concerned with curbing my behavior in terms of safety, than I was with *language teaching*.

Indeed, I did not realize that positive student-teacher interaction was even possible in prison, given the prescribed written and unwritten rules for my behavior and the students' behavior. Of primary concern in my first two years of teaching in the prison were the safety and security issues. How I followed the rules, advice, and warnings regarding "appropriateness" and safety that were set before me took precedence in my mind, and I believe in the minds of those with whom I worked. Consequently, security concerns dominated my interaction with my students. Only later, would I see the value of changing my behavior and my role as a teacher in a prison setting. The first three stages of the "Continuum of Behavior Changes" on the following page illustrate this movement.

CONTINUUM OF BEHAVIOR CHANGES*4

1. Aug. 1991 - June 1992
I saw my examples in other prison staff (guards' "institutional authority"). I mimicked this authoritative stance with my students.

I perceived myself to be the most vulnerable at this point. I was new to the prison and felt that I had to assert authority and make distance between my students and me. This is the least risky stage in the continuum.

2. Jan. 1992 - Dec. 1992
After attaining the demeanor of "institutional authority," I observed non-custody staff's behavior (e.g. counselors). Although I observed alternatives, I still did not question the status quo behavior which I exhibited. I was beginning to get uncomfortable with my behavior of distancing and self-protection in the classroom, but I still didn't know if I wanted to or could change.

3. Stage one: Jan. 1993 - Sept. 1993
I realized that I needed more models to base my language teaching on. This included my growing dissatisfaction with my behavior and the overall climate in my classroom. I applied to graduate school (School for International Training).

Stage two: Sept 1993 - Nov. 1993
First summer at SIT. I did not believe that a dramatic change in my existing "institutional authority" was possible. I argued that "I work in a different area. This will not work in a prison!" Wasn't how I was acting before the best, safest way??

4. Nov. 1993 - May 1994
Two teacher trainers visited my worksite and challenged me not to ESL teach bilingually. I put away some of my assumptions and tried this new way. I took risks. I also implemented more participatory activities in the classroom. I had interrupted my past pattern of demonstrating "institutional authority." Overall, I showed more flexibility as a teacher than ever before.

5. Sept. 94 - present
I invite students to call me by my first name. I talk to students frankly about class organization. I explain why I do certain activities. I receive regular feedback. I have discovered an invaluable sense of humor in my students that keeps our momentum up. This is a riskier stage, in that the teacher is open to change and to questioning her protocol. Also, some students might mistake this openness as weakness in the teacher. Inappropriate actions might take place. In general, there is more equality and students feel more at ease.

6. In my opinion, this last stage, is the most risky in the continuum. It involves taking one's experience of behavioral change and educating a group of people (teachers, administrators, etc.). This person must be patient in helping the people through these stages at their own pace.

Actively join the behavior | No response | Educate oneself | Interrupt the behavior | Interrupt and educate | Initiate an organized response

*4 The framework of this timeline is from the Univ. of Massachusetts at Amherst, Social Issues Project).

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"The cultivation of respect for others is an essential part of right education."

Origins and Role Models of Distance

My co-worker at the time I began this teaching position ("Yvonne"), was a veteran teacher. She had been at the prison for six years. I remember the strong, clear advice she gave me: "Do not sit too close to the students. Do not spend too much time with an individual student, he (or his classmates) might get the *wrong idea.* Safety and security for the institution and for you are of primary importance. We try to get along with the prison staff here as much as possible. They will make it easier for us. Remember, we are guests here [contract staff]."

Yvonne and I felt comfortable together chatting about usually non-school subjects; however, I was puzzled at how much time she spent away from the students and in her office given her experience with teaching. She was polite, professional, savvy, yet also distant. Six years of working by herself in this small prison institution had taken its toll. Simply put, Yvonne was *burned-out.*

The logging town was small and limited. The location of the prison was even more remote. Surprising to visitors, there was no fence to keep the prisoners from walking away to their escape, until just this year. Before, the rugged mountain and long distances kept prisoners from leaving. Both the location of the town and of the work site is an area of wilderness and very far from a small city. For many years Yvonne had been the only teacher in the prison of 250 inmates. Her supervisor was over 60 miles away and rarely visited her. She needed secretarial and educational support; but most of all, she needed moral support and professional camaraderie. As much for

inmate students as well as teachers, this human connection to others is *the* crucial aspect of surviving and thriving in an isolated environment. Here, she was very isolated from other professionals, until I came on board.

Yvonne's distance between herself and the students was a result of working alone with inmates in a secluded room next to the loud gymnasium, in a remote prison work camp, in an extremely remote corner of the Pacific Northwest where it rains up to 120 inches every year. By counseling her new teacher recruit on the do's and don'ts of teaching inmates, she hoped to make it safe for me to work in this setting.

It was this *distance* between me and the students that I was supposed to initially develop at this new job. From that point of distance I was told it would be easier to make changes toward a more trusting relationship with the students. I was told that the black and white boundaries given to the students by me, the new teacher, would become so natural and consistent that both the inmates and I would feel much more comfortable in those moments of con manipulation or inappropriate behavior. Indeed, assuming the stance of a strict teacher would prevent most inappropriate interaction between me and the students. This made sense to me, and I set off acting in this fashion to the best of my abilities.

My General "Teacher Behavior"

"How important it is that both the educator and the [student] should be free from the fear of punishment and hope of reward; compulsion will continue as long as authority is part of relationship."

Initially my concept of self was this: polite, professional, socially distant, limited caring, and consistent. This is how I perceived the attributes of an "ideal" corrections teacher. That is, for teachers to do their jobs in prison, they should **first** be cautious of inmate and staff behavior at all times. Second, they should consider whether or not their demeanor could be interpreted as sexual, weak (and therefore not in control), ambiguous (and therefore be a potential "sucker"), or subversive in regards to corrections policy. Indeed, ABE/ESL teachers inside and outside prison are urged to maintain an "appropriate professional distance" between themselves and their students (Willing, 1994). Some teacher trainers believe that the potential for litigation, teacher burnout, and inappropriate roles ("that's not in my job description" sentiment), are all solid reasons to avoid getting to know our students beyond interpreting their learning styles or academic score on a test.

In my interpretation of this warning to stay distant, I responded to both what was expected of me by corrections staff and to how I felt I should behave given my personal characteristics and my fears (young, female, inexperienced with prisoners). In addition to perceiving these challenges, I was not immune to feelings of distance and even disgust, when I decided to read about the particularly violent crimes of some students. The influence of this perceived moral characteristic of "difference" and therefore, "distance" between a violent offender and a non-prisoner cannot be underestimated. Yet, in donning the official stance of professional distance (again, one in which I held a stake), and institutional authority, *I was not really teaching*. That is, this Catch-22 of distance prevented any real rapport between teacher and student. I never personally related to a prisoner, shared any personal information, listened to their personal stories, nor received feedback from

them concerning their expectations of the class, their thoughts in general, or their hopes for their lives when they would be released.

Indeed, while my co-worker Yvonne was there for my first six months, I primarily stayed in the office, socializing and trying to muster courage to "go out in the lab more frequently." I would have an inner argument: one side saying "Jose needs your attention," and the other side giving me a *power* statement, "he has got to get used to waiting for us. We are not their servants. Also you don't want him to get the wrong idea do you?" Knowing that my students were needy for my attention in general, made me uneasy. Their attention comes from both a desire to receive help as much as a desire to practice their social skills through flirting and jiving.

> He or she [the teacher] must show a much greater level of patience and tolerance than one would normally show. - L.O.

The structure of the "Learning Lab" made this lack of confrontation with students quite common. The office formed a separate room from where we could observe the students. This "individualized Learning Lab" comprised the education program, except for a weekly English conversation class which I instructed. Unfortunately, the Learning Lab did not, and does not, provide an adequate environment for beginning language learners. In this environment, students may feel isolated, limited, and at a loss for learning English by communicating.

> ***"Fear perverts intelligence and is one of the causes of self-centered action"***

My behavior was very controlled. I helped students on *my* time. I decided how close I would get to them, physically and emotionally. They

waited and observed me. I wanted to be in control. Above all else, I was afraid of losing that appearance of control and composure. Again, this behavior reflected the prison staffs' ways of operating and controlling the inmates and of course, partially reflected my uncomfortable feelings around "criminals." Since we as staff were outnumbered by the inmates, we had to give them and ourselves the *appearance* that we were in control. In the middle of the mountains on the edge of a logging road, this *faking-out*, gave me, and I hoped them, the impression that I was in total control of the classroom, and thus "safe."

> I think it's safe to say that the professor may expect intimidation. The inmates' world is a jungle where the law of survival of the fittest operates, either overtly or covertly. - L.O.

It was a fine tightrope I was walking: On one hand, I was not conscious of the possibility of sharing control, or authority, with the students in small but meaningful ways (for example, asking them for feedback); On the other hand, my intuition told me that my ostensible teacher-control was superficial and a device to conceal my fear. Only later would I realize that to really feel comfortable in the classroom, I would have to earn respect by also respecting my students as a group and as individuals. Following the progression shown in my Continuum of Behavior Change, I would have to risk the consequences of changing my role and behavior as a teacher. This would allow me to more fully accept my students and concentrate on their learning.

In my first year, my indecision about my authority and authority in the prison continued to sway back and forth. I was still fearful of personally knowing my students, the "inmates." At this stage (stage two in the Continuum), I felt uncomfortable in my role as teacher. I did not ask students

what their lives were like inside and outside the prison. I did not ask them to tell me what their plans were upon release nor what their crimes were. Although I did not hesitate to peer into their criminal files and view the particulars of their crimes, I did not want them to enter into a mutual, freer, one-to-one exchange with me. I feared that if there were shared personal knowledge, it would begin a dangerous relationship between student and teacher.

Although uncomfortable at this stage in my teaching, I walked the staff's walk that I had learned and observed in the prison setting. In what I perceived as obeying the rules of security and orderly operation in the prison, was also personal protection. "This is my job after all, to follow rules," I thought. Yet, in forming a wall of personal protection around me, I had to question my prior teaching experience, which told me to form connections with my students. I questioned the students as equal humans beings, and finally, I questioned my intuition. Indeed, referring to students as "inmates" was (and often still is) commonplace for all staff. This tag helps to disassociate the namer from the named. It was an environment of criticism, waiting for me to decide whether to break or follow the rules and codes of the institution. It seemed very black and white to me. Either one is right or one is wrong. One is either a staff person or an inmate. Separateness.

> One must enter a prison class with assurance, with bravado – feigned or otherwise. One must also be over-prepared, having enough material to keep the class busy until the end of the class period. - L.O.

My relative social and psychological remoteness with my students (and prison staff), was continually reinforced by the routines and reality of the prison: inmate count during class, routine transportation procedures and

problems, and the primacy of inmates' work assignments in comparison with their education program. I could not carry on a conversation, a class, or an interview with students without these interruptions. Since I perceived these prison procedures as having primary importance, I subordinated my teaching to them. Yet in the back of my mind, I was still unsatisfied with this institutional authority-performance as a teacher. I was caught in the middle, and unsure how to go about changing my behavior. Unaware of the process of change itself, I was actually developing my identity as a teacher in the prison.

At this time, I began questioning how I was interacting with students. I even questioned whether I should be in the prison environment or teaching profession. When they asked (and ask) "how do you *do it* as a woman?" I could revel in their wonderment, and yet be caught in its false assumptions, its blindness, and start espousing these questions myself. I would then question myself: "what *am I* doing here?" In asking this question I was seeing myself still as an outsider in a hostile environment, and only secondly seeing myself as a professional teacher. Because of the ongoing self-criticism and paternalistic/cautious institution of the prison, I felt like I was just pretending to be a teacher in my work, going through the motions without crossing any meaningful boundaries -- not really *being* a teacher. The tightrope and balancing act of control and security on one hand, and my intuition and growing concern for my role as a true teacher on the other, was coming to the fore.

Institutional Authority: Teacher/Student Behavior in the Classroom

As earlier described, during my first year, distance, control and authority took hold of me and my students in very specific ways. I call this type of authority, "institutional authority." In many ways, the students as inmates, are accustomed to following rules from another person (usually staff), and understanding specific boundaries of appropriateness in communication and interaction (rules). This is institutional authority. Most important, this type of authority is reflected in the act of inmates having others take decision-making away from them or making decisions for them. It is the nature and history of our prisons.

The consequence of acting distant and fairly humorless as a teacher, was that I received few requests for favors from these inmates. This was easy for me. No disciplinary write-ups or embarrassing situations caused by inappropriate behavior existed. The conditioning of the prison's behavior system has its security and organizational benefits. I was relieved that I was able to manipulate institutional authority to protect me in this way. It made my job easier and safer.

During my first year, students understood "the black/white line" in my class, as they did throughout the prison itself -- in the kitchen, the living units, and in the gym. I was never asked by a student to change a lesson or to bring in anything from the outside. Nor was I ever asked if I had a boyfriend, if I was married, etc. Both the status quo of my lessons, my "personal space" and the prison were protected. Students were being *acted upon* instead of initiating action. Because of this dearth of sharing information and ideas between me and the students, I believe that we were only partially engaged in class. Education theorist Paolo Freire might see this setting as a paternalistic

and uninvested --not *real* education for the people. Theorist Michel Foucault would comment that it represented the "panoptic vision," all knowing teacher's eye that objectifies and distances, of prison architecture. Regardless of the critical review of this system, the prison institution perpetuates viewing the inmate as "other," as criminal.

By protecting my personal space and life and by maintaining institutional authority, I forfeited the flexibility of listening to my students and the hopes of changing my class delivery and content. I always tried to keep my attitude solid and consistent, and unfortunately this also meant consistently distant. In my isolation as a teacher in a remote setting, I was cutting off a valuable resource for collaboration, my students. I omitted pursuing "professional authority" or simply stated, effective teaching.

This institutional demeanor that I espoused at work had an effect on my personal life as well. The conservative nature, rigidity, and heavy paperwork load in my job, resulted in a more serious person at home. Although I drew a distinct line between work and play, and could pass between these two worlds easily, I believe that my work environment made me more distrusting of people in general, and men, specifically. Yet, at home I also had an elevated sense of control and confidence that filtered into all situations. As if to say "Hey! I jumped out of an airplane, I can do anything. Hey! I work in a male prison institution, I can do anything!" People's curiosity about my job increased my sense of self confidence as well. Needless to say, these effects were not tied to reality in the sense that they were actually an *illusion* of having more control, and living in the us-and-them (real people vs. inmate) syndrome.

A teacher, upon examining the layers of communication and interaction between the teacher and students, must ask herself as I did after time, "Do I want to bridge a wide gap between teacher and student that is in place in the existing order of the prison; and if so, to what extent?" This is a personal and professional question that will be asked continually in the mind of the teacher and it affects the teacher's growing identity in this special setting.

To a certain extent, Yvonne's advice to me was correct. It *is* easier to start out tough, gain respect, and later develop respect with students. Is this not how conquerors do it? Yet, I found that this same distance, albeit temporary, impeded me from teaching the students, from relating to them, and impeded them from relating to me. For me, a young teacher and new to corrections, I could never fully let go of either conflicting thought in the tightrope act. What was my compromise? It took approximately two years to begin questioning this distance and institutional authority and begin experimenting with and seeking my alternatives and style. My teachers and colleagues in graduate school pushed me to critically think about my assumptions of my students, methods, and my authority. After an initial defensive stance, I slowly started experimenting with changing my behavior and questioning my teaching actions. Then, I decided to take the risk to change the way I behave and teach here in prison.

> Classroom and individual discipline may be the most serious aspect of teaching in a prison that the prison professor has to fare. - L.O.

OUR STUDENTS IN CORRECTIONS ESL PROGRAMS

In this chapter, I will explore characteristics of all students in corrections education as well as the specific traits and challenges of ESL students. The reasons for an inmate taking leave of his or her cell and joining a classroom are many. This information tells us more about our students. It also tells us about the environment in which our students live – the prison. When inmates walk into the education area, their identity changes. They are now called "students," not "inmates" or "offenders." Their measure of respect increases, and consequently so does their behavior. It is their desire to be in a non-threatening and non-negative environment that forms the basis for participating in the classroom. As teachers in corrections are unique in the field of education, so too are ESL students in the corrections' environment. These differences challenge our conceptions of existing correction education practices and of efforts to "rehabilitate." The background information provided in this chapter will give the reader insight into these characteristics and into these students and their insitutions, as they currently exist. The hope for future changes in policy and curricula is also embedded in this discussion.

> Students have educational, family, behavior, mental health and physical problems. An effective teacher is mature, creative, self-aware, flexible sincere and student centered. - R.H.

Current Statistics and Education Information - What Levels of Education do Inmates Generally Have?

Besides wanting to take a vacation from the often abrasive institutional authority in their living units, many students also make the step into the

education facility because they want to improve their educational skills – and for good reason. One significant difference between the prison population and the general U.S. population, lies in students' education backgrounds. According to the 1993 Literacy Survey, 50% of the inmates surveyed did not have a high school diploma, compared with 23% of the general population (U.S. Department of Education, 49). Also, 17% of the prison population received their General Education Diploma, compared with only 4% of the general population. This latter statistic conveys the message that a higher proportion of prison inmates left high school (or grade school) and some of these inmates improved their test scores and completed their degrees while incarcerated.

> Excessive turnover makes it difficult to develop and maintain programs that simultaneously rehabilitate, educate, and control. - R.H.

The population in state prisons has a higher proportion of these things: unemployment history, learning handicaps, high-school drop out rates, and an over representation of Afro-Americans. Upon entrance to the prison, "fewer than 10 percent can pass an achievement test at the 12.0 grade level," (U.S. Department of Education, 48). The literacy survey suggests that because fewer relative numbers of Caucasians in prisons exist, a lower education level for all inmates results. 44% of the prison population is Afro American, whereas outside of prison, they constitute 11%. Hispanics comprise 10% of the general population, whereas in prison, they comprise 18%.

In addition to education levels, races, and literacy test scores, there is also a major discrepancy regarding gender between the prison and the general populations. Whereas men make up only 48% of the general population, they comprise 94% of the prison population. In addition to having less educated individuals, more men, and fewer whites, there are also younger individuals in

prison than the general population. These prison statistics have stayed fairly consistent over several decades, (Edelson, 13) and they evoke questions regarding appropriate educational models, methodologies and goals for a population that differs from the culture and background of the decision making administration.

Hispanics - Who Are They After Entering the Prison?

Comparing statistics regarding Hispanics is difficult as there are different definitions of the classifying term "Hispanic." The U.S. Department of Education in their 1993 survey on adult literacy in America, places "Hispanic" in a racial/ethnic category, separate from the category "White." In this context, "Hispanic" includes persons from Spanish-speaking communities outside of the U.S. , whereas in corrections literature, "Hispanic" is a sub-category of "White," and means that the mother tongue is Spanish. Some Hispanics, however, may want to be referred to as "Latino," meaning a distinct culture other than the Spanish-influenced "Hispanic" one.

In this paper and for simplicity, "Hispanic" will refer to all native Spanish-speakers born outside of the U.S. Since there are not many solid statistics about foreign-born individuals in U.S. prisons (Edelson, 13), it will be useful to use the single term "Hispanic" in this way. Despite the discrepancies in statistics and in the language, we will be able to generally describe Spanish-speaking ESL students in Washington state prisons.

About 15% of all Washington state prisoners are from countries other than the United States. The majority of these prisoners are from Spanish-speaking countries, especially those prisoners who reside in minimum-security prisons. In part, this preponderance of Spanish-speaking inmates in minimum security institutions is a reflection of the crime, and therefore the length of sentence, of

these individuals. Primarily convicted for non-violent drug offenses, Hispanic inmates usually serve fewer than two years for their first criminal offense. A drug offender can be charged with possession, intent to deliver (sell), or technically, use of an illegal drug. By virtue of their typically shorter sentences, many arrive at minimum security and mixed-custody prisons – designed for these shorter sentences (6 - 36 months, typically).

Drug Offenders - What Is the Future Like for ESL Classrooms and Their Students?

"Drug offenders" are those inmates who were arrested on grounds such as delivery or possession of an illegal substance. Although there is now proposed 1995 legislation to lower sentences for first time nonviolent drug offenders, there has been an overall increase in prosecuting drug offenders over the past ten years. It can also be argued that in the past ten years there has been an increase in using highly addictive drugs, such as crack. A current study conservatively showed that 60% of adult inmates in different regions of the U.S. regularly used illegal drugs (McBride, 265). Because of the increase in prosecution and because most ESL students are convicted as drug offenders, a need exists for more ESL classes.

Of course, this means more dollars to support this growth in the prison, and recently taxpayers and legislators are growing critical of education programs in general (Christie 1994). The growth of prisons and of community criticism will both likely continue given the high numbers of incarcerated drug offenders and the public's growing frustration with increased criminal activity and recividism (A lengthier discussion of convicting individuals of committing drug crimes is explored later in this chapter).

"ESL" in Prison - What Are the ESL Class Objectives in the Prison Setting? Where does ESL Stand in Comparison to other Classes?

English as a Second Language is found under the general umbrella of "Adult Basic Education" in Washington state. ABE is a classification for students who are tested with the Test of Adult Basic Education and receive below the ninth grade level equivalent in math, language, or in reading comprehension. It is a mixed blessing that ESL is found under the ABE classification. While ESL is saved from immediate danger of being cut by the budget ax, it does suffer from something of an identity crisis. This may have an effect of lessening the importance of ESL programs in the eyes of prison and education administration. It then becomes paramount for ESL teachers to realize the importance and legitimacy of their programs and not to think otherwise after hearing public comments about "teaching the *illegal illegals.*"

> What the casual observer of the prison situation may not realize is that the prisoner is extremely isolated from everyone--he has no sounding board for his ideas. - L.O.

Part of this identity crisis also stems from the problem of data collection and tracking. Unlike English-speaking students, ESL students are not given literacy, intelligence, or vocational tests at their initial intake session at the general receiving units in Shelton, Washington. Varying diagnostic assessments are therefore usually conducted by the teachers at each institution. The hindrance in this existing set-up is two-fold: first, data on the ESL population is limited to only those inmates who (choose to) enroll in an ESL program during their incarceration. Second, and more important, there is no single assessment tool in Washington state that is given to those ESL students in prison.

Although the CASAS test (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System), is often used as both a diagnostic and an achievement assessment, it has not won the favor of all teachers and thus, cannot be relied upon to carry significant data concerning the ESL population. Since there is no uniformity of test, there is no incentive to record these test scores, and thus "track" students, on the state-wide computer system, called "OBTS." Data on ESL inmates (both those enrolled and not enrolled in school) is consequently lacking overall. Thus, teachers throughout the state often must begin at the assessment drawing board when a new ESL student arrives at their door from another state institution.

> My students see themselves as irretrievable goods, lost in the shuffle, no parents or dead parents. These guys are from tough Asian gangs. They are serious criminals. They know guns. They prefer guns. They are young. They have different goals; it's a challenge to find a common one.
> - N.D.

Another reason for the ESL identity crisis might stem from teachers' questioning of state ESL teaching objectives. In Washington state, ESL teachers are required to encorporate the functional/survival "core competency" guidelines (Appendix C). However, because of the difficulty of tracking the completion of the many functional objectives, teaching *to* the functionally-based objectives, or because of teachers' dissatisfaction with the objectives themselves (e.g. map reading, shopping, writing checks, etc.), the core competencies might only be paid lip service in many classrooms.

> More flexibility is needed in prison education departments. - N.D.

Beyond the questions of curriculum and assessment, the structure of the ESL classroom itself also has an identity crisis. Where and when there is no "ESL Teacher," there usually is an ABE lab where ESL classes are available only as

informal "pull out" sessions. A "lab" is a catch-all period, where ESL, GED, ABE, and college level students work in the same area, on their individual materials. Usually, there are one or possibly two teachers monitoring the lab and assisting *individuals*, individually. Sometimes a part-time teacher is hired to conduct ESL classes.

> The style of the Learning Lab most affects my teaching. It inhibits group work and students learning social and interpersonal skills. It is a large structural barrier which is hard to get around because it "serves" so many people. - M.L.

Based on the 1980's model of individualized instruction and lesson plans, this laboratory model can impede language learning. In prisons, unfortunately the "lab" environment still exists in places due to limited *educational* staff training, lack of commitment to education excellence (a remnant of the "baby-sitting" syndrome opinion of administration or staff), or because of a financial lack of commitment to staffing ESL classes with an ESL-trained teacher. Dropping out of the education program and failure to improve may result if beginning ESL (and ABE) students do not receive group instruction.

One piece of good news in Washington state is that there has recently been a push for integrating "thinking skills" into group ESL classes and other ABE programs. Listed as ICANS (Integrated Curriculum for Achieving Necessary Skills), these skills require that group interaction take place. Still, smaller institutions with only one or two teachers may rely on the lab environment even when attempting to reach the goals of such thinking skills as cooperative learning. Although this change has affected the education programs in only some Washington state prisons, it is a valiant effort at changing the lab-like classes that have been so prevalent in the past.

ESL Class Compositions in Prison - Who Attends and Who Doesn't Attend?

ESL classes in Washington state are typically attended by Hispanics. Even though Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other languages represent other inmate populations, there is not a mixture of ethnicities, in the ESL classroom. Why? Either because of education administration's or teachers' perceptions that ESL students in class should be monocultural, or because of the students' avoidance of racial, social and linguistic integration in the ESL classroom, or because of a higher proficiency of spoken English on the part of non-Spanish speaking ESL populations, there is little mixing of ESL populations in this prison context.

This is a characteristic of the prison ESL classroom that must be examined critically. If multiculturalism, problem solving, and other 21st century skills are to be practiced in the ESL classroom, then an ESL classroom should also be mixed. Too often an education program reflects the social and ethnic segregation that occurs within its prison walls. Much energy will be devoted to integrating all ESL learners in one class successfully and without incident.

Why do ESL students attend?

It may be somewhat surprising that ESL students find their way to the education programs in such high numbers in particular institutions, given that they are not assessed at the general prison receiving units, they may receive little or no education orientation in their native languages, and given that they may lack much formal education. A non-native English speaking inmate will seek out the school environment for many reasons, the most important of which, is simply to spend time in a non-threatening environment. More ESL students will attend if they perceive the education environment as non-threatening, or where the authority asserted is directed toward language learning instead of ostensible

behavior control. The ESL inmate will receive most information regarding classes through word of mouth from other inmates who have had positive experiences in this school.

Mixed security facilities (major institutions with maximum, medium, minimum and protective custody), offer more varied classes, yet these are often off limits to beginning and intermediate speakers of English. Presently, there is a concentration of "functional" curricula, which is geared toward vocational/life skills training and away from academics, so that students can be "productive citizens." Classes such as Personal Growth/Management, Anger Management, Chemical Dependency, Video Technology, Parenting, Carpentry, Business, Tutor Training, Computer Technology, Automotive Mechanics, and Drafting, are offered at prison in addition to the G.E.D., E.S.L., A.B.E. courses of study; however, the offerings at a given institution may only provide a few of these courses. Again, ESL students are less likely to be in any of these classes because of the language barrier. A lack of bilingual staff limits ESL students from taking these courses.

Since many of these classes are restricted from Hispanics, they often choose to "begin at the beginning" by attending voluntary English language classes. Once they have some ability with the language, they take advantage of other classes as well. At Olympic Corrections Center, Hispanics comprise 20% of the population, but constitute 50% of the participants in the general education program. While many students to take a relaxed stance toward language learning in the classroom, others are very serious about fully participating in the ESL class.

Both corrections students and the correction education researchers cite other opportunistic reasons for the popularity of English classes for limited English speaking inmates. First, the ESL class offers this inmate a *free* way to

study English that could have often immediate and future economic and personal benefits to the student both in and outside prison. The monolingual Spanish-speaking inmate is at a severe disadvantage concerning the institutional staff and other inmates. He must rely on, or pay others, to counsel him, make requests, fill out forms, understand rules, and much, much more. "The School" offers him an often informal, discrete way to improve his communication ability.

Second, the ESL class can offer both a place of camaraderie (especially for students of a similar culture) and a place of solace and self-development. Many ESL (and non ESL) prisoners see the classroom, the learning lab, or the education staff as "safe"; where they can again be treated not as prisoners, but as individual - real people (Paup 1993).

Third, it is possible that their former lack of educational opportunities combined with their precarious existence in an English speaking and controlled environment work toward their high attendance in educational programs. A survey polled Latinos in the United States and found that they have a high cultural value placed on "education" (Bedard, 76). This also may contribute to their high attendance rates in corrections education programs.

Finally, we may look at the entire prison population for additional reasons inmates have for attending education programs. Using an instrument called the Prison Educational Participation Scale (PEPS), R. Boshier surveyed 102 inmates to find some answers (Parsons and Langenbach, 38). Not surprising, he found that adult inmates attend education programs for similar reasons as other adults: Cognitive interest, personal control, self-preservation, and outside contact were described as reasons for both students inside and outside the prison. However, unique to prisoners was "avoidance posture," which allowed students to avoid an unpleasant environment and escape from their living units to school. This factor cannot be underestimated for Hispanic inmates who seek refuge in a place

where they can understand, be understood, and escape the constant, interrogative eyes of most custody staff. The authority of the prison often tires individuals and results in despondent attitudes.

> Content of the curriculum is less crucial than the pedagogy chosen and the quality of the teachers. - D.G.

Through individual interviews, students in prison have stated why they personally enjoy attending the education program. One student at Washington Corrections Center stated, "In prison, school is the only thing that makes you feel good; on the outside you're free. There's everything to make you forget your trouble" (Paup 1994a).

Another student said that he liked his independence and the nontraditional look of the prison school. He said that it looked like a business college, instead of a prison. A student named Jim who is 50 years old and has 10 more years to serve at Clallam Bay Corrections Center in Washington State, said that he liked how other classmates did not tease him because of his reading struggle. He stated, "I get less frustrated now. I can laugh it off and show my frustration this way. It has gotten me to control my temper. Mistakes are not bad" (Paup 1994b). One strong reason for attending classes while in prison remains in the realm of avoiding the directives and one-way communication (commands) from staff to inmate.

Despite these favorable replies there are also some disincentives to attending school in the prison. Full-time, low paying jobs are available at most institutions. These often mean that employed inmates cannot attend the school during the day. Also, inmates might see the ESL class as a threat to their language and their culture (Edelson, 38). That is, by adopting the culture and the

language of those who run the institution, they might lose some of their individual ethnic culture and identity.

> The most difficult thing for me to deal with as a teacher is unmotivated students. Now students are required to program during two periods per day, so they are in class to get time off their sentence essentially. - S.D.

Like classes outside the prison, some students have stated that other students are not serious enough and that they distract them from learning. They say that some students do not care about learning and that they go to the school just to get out of their bunks and do "mandatory programming." Indeed, especially in maximum and mixed custody prisons where there are fewer institutional jobs for inmates, many inmates also attend school because they can earn "good time," or an early release from prison (up to one-third deducted from their original sentence). This is an important motivating factor for students in medium, maximum and mixed custody institutions. Coming to school to reduce one's prison sentence can result in apathetic and uninterested students who may just wish to socialize with fellow students. In cases such as these, it is then the teacher's decision to engage them in learning, or if the student is continually disruptive, to suspend the student from class and focus her energy on those who do wish to be there.

How Relevant Are Institutional and Social Class Goals to ESL Students?

Since ESL is found under the larger ABE umbrella, we must ask ourselves as ESL teachers, if the ABE education goals and assumptions should be applied to ESL prison classrooms. Do our ESL students need or agree on the same skills as non-ESL students in prison? Is it difficult to use the words "drop-out" and "changing values" if we do not know what values the students themselves have?

Do we recognize that teaching an inmate language, and therefore another culture, can be a way of challenging their values? Again, the answers to these questions lie with the individual teachers and administrators. The ESL staff and students would benefit from asking this question regarding their program.

If we view education as a "moral" education to reduce recidivism (teaching students to recognize and accept a legal version of right or wrong), we must then ask ourselves, if by teaching the students English as a Second Language are we *rehabilitating* them? Do they have "criminal minds" in the first place? Or, are they just looking for better economic opportunities and their conviction of a drug offense is an unlucky symptom of their search? Would non-U.S. drug offenders benefit from substance abuse programs? Do they exhibit the cognitive deficits linked to "criminal behavior": difficulty with delaying gratification, inability to consider consequences of behavior, low frustration tolerance, lack of consideration and empathy for others, etc. (Rider-Hankins, 16).

Viewing drugs as bad, is a construct, albeit a present day law. Researchers have commented on the U.S. *social construction* of drugs being immoral*with* an historic anti-foreign sentiment since the 1920's (McBride, 259). Before the 1920's, drugs received a more diverse reception: cocaine and marijuana were used legally and "medically." This changing perception of drugs must be remembered when putting ourselves in our students' cultural shoes. The varying degrees of how drugs are viewed by different people and at different times in history, has implications on how we "rehabilitate" and educate the inmate student. Does this Mexican inmate view the sale of drugs as a legitimate job? Does the inmate see the use of the drug as morally harmful? If not, the student might not see himself in need of *rehabilitation*.

The social assumptions concerning the seriousness and immorality of drugs that we hold in the U.S. may be different from others outside the U.S. hold.

In this sense, there may be a wide discrepancy between the institutional/U.S. assumption of the drug offender and the one held by the "outsider" drug offender. This poses interesting and complicated cultural questions for rehabilitative treatment, if "rehabilitation" is indeed what education in prisons professes to accomplish in the first place. The answers may not be forthcoming, but it is important to pose the questions and remind ourselves and our administrators of the unique nature of ESL students and instruction.

Through informal interviews it has been found that many Mexican students will come back to the U.S. shortly after their deportation to "the border" at Tijuana, Mexico (Paup 1993a). These students are returning to and living in this country. Corrections education programs need to accept this fact and use it to enhance their existing ESL programs. Despite the disagreements in beliefs of *how to and what* we should offer to ESL students in prison, it is in everyone's best interest to teach this growing and unique population in ways above and beyond the ways we were accustomed to in the past.

What Do ESL Students Then Need?

Beyond redefining the notion of "criminality" with our ESL students and the question of choosing different content for their classes, there is evidence that staff should pay attention to the affective side of ESL students. Teachers can assist the students and "foster feelings of safety and security in offenders born outside of the United States," (Bedard, Eschholz, and Gertz, 75). Given that ESL students are "doubly illegal," they are prime participants in educational programs in language, culture and transition-training.

They are marginalized in this double way because they are usually illegal immigrants to the United States, culturally marginal from "the norm" prison staff authorities, and they are also illegal as state prisoners for having committed a

felony. In the classroom they might have needs for immigration information and immigration laws besides having unique stress and emotional needs (Edelson, 30; Binnian 1994).

Twenty years ago, the director of Education Staff in the Federal Bureau of Prisons stated that Spanish-speaking prisoners had "unique problems requiring special attention" (Edelson, 16). Today in state prisons, there is unfortunately not an official recognition of limited English speaking inmates and their particular needs. Currently, they have equal rights to some education programs, but again, they are hampered by their lack of language regarding participation in most classes, finding out about resources, knowing their rights, and regarding an understanding of simple rules and regulations.

A suggestion has been made by some corrections education researchers to offer bilingual programs to Hispanic inmates (Bedard, 74). Because many native Spanish speakers and even Mexican American bilinguals speak both Spanish and English at home, these researchers suggest that education programs mimic this two-language system and also bridge a large cultural gap between an administration (rules and systems) and the Hispanic inmate. These advocates for the bilingual program argue that it would affirm the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, while at the same time, introduce English culture and language through a familiar medium.

The question of teaching them Spanish *or* English has been entertained by teachers also. However, the aims of this program would not mesh with those of corrections administrators. That is, where teaching English to prisoners can be seen as practical and useful inside and outside the prison, teaching inmates their native tongue, can unfortunately be seen as excessive, lavish, and unnecessary.

Also, this idea presents difficulties when considering the current objectives of the prison administration (to teach English only), with non-Spanish

speaking ESL students (such as Vietnamese), and with limited resources in smaller facilities. What *is* needed say others, are programs to teach educators how to interact culturally with the expanding "minority" population in our prisons (Bedard, 72). By understanding the relationships between cultures (including one's own), the educator, and corrections administrator, will be more adept at positively interacting with the student. For ESL teachers, more participatory activities are encouraged in class. We can simply begin by asking the student himself what he needs and wants to learn.

In a state prison, the education program depends on the environment of the prison, the administration of the education program (community college or otherwise), and the administration of the prison. Administrators do look at inmates for assessing the needs of a program, but unfortunately it is still this surveillance-like look. Again, the decision-makers are often those who are outside the real prison "experience."

How do we know what prisoners really need? How do we know what ESL students need? Do we see all prison populations as a single group in need of rehabilitation? What are we trying to accomplish with education -- correction of drug addiction, immoral behavior, antisocial behavior, illiteracy, cooperative learning? These questions are the difficult ones. Obviously, standard methods of rehabilitation (and lower recidivism), have failed before. We must look for new ideas and to the inmates themselves for some of the answers. If an ESL teacher is to relate to the students through a teaching style of professional authority instead of institutional authority, then some structural changes in program content and importance must be made.

The Environment of the Prison and the Administrators' Attitudes -- Their Effects on the Teacher and on the Education Program

> It is difficult to teach in an environment where the common core of all of the students is that they are afraid and intimidated. It makes learning slow, different, difficult. This is deliberately done by custody (the blue shirts) so as to keep control. It has a residual effect in my classroom. This isn't BAD, it just IS. It is necessary for custody to have inmates in this marginal position. - J.F.

The organization of the prison institution, which is based on a military model, can be theoretically and realistically, in conflict with the philosophies of education (student-centered notions, freedom of ideas, etc). "Personal autonomy, intellectual freedom, and accessibility to resources are precisely those characteristics of education subverted by penal institutions" (Goldin, 129). Though the classroom can be seen by students as an oasis in an otherwise barren desert, the modus operandi of the prison and its departments is: security via hierarchy, authority, and a punishment and reward system of enforcement. This can either have an eventual trickle-down or an immediate effect on both the educational program and the teachers' demeanors and attitudes.

> Intimidation doesn't work. Before, I was very rigid and didn't talk to them much, I was strictly business. Now, I try to break it down, have a conversation so there's not the tension. The officers represent power. They can send them to seg [segregation] for anything. Since we don't have that power and we try not to portray that power, it's better to have these mini conversations with students instead. I am closer to them, but always aware of 'the wall.' - Q.S

According to a 1994 survey of Washington state prison superintendents, one of the primary reasons to have an education program is to "reduce idleness" and to assist in the "secure operation of the [prison] facility" (Sweeney, 1). The more traditional reasons for education, increased "job readiness" and "improved self-concept," were also mentioned. But what effect does awareness of this first reason of eliminating idleness have upon professional educators in the facility? And to what extent does this attitude influence how teachers interact with their students? These are both open questions that will be answered differently by the individual teacher at each prison. Some teachers can have conflict between their personal ideas of education and those of their "sponsoring" institution (Wolford, 359).

On one hand, this attitude of eliminating inmate idleness can serve to belittle the goal of education as self-advancement and reduce respect for the teacher's job. It depends on how closely an educator allies herself or himself to this opinion, and to what degree this opinion exists in the work environment. A teacher might become embittered if she perceives a devaluation of her education program by administration as well as by custody officers.

> I thought I would be educating students as a top priority. Too often I find I am babysitting For D.O.C. and simply providing FTE [full-time equivalent] for some report. -L.R.

Soon after they begin their job, corrections teachers recognize this belief that education is a program which keeps the inmates "busy." Indeed, corrections students also state that they come to the education department to stay busy and out of trouble. Teachers might feel compelled, especially at first, to follow the routine of ostensible institution authority instead of their professional intuition. For example, the gravity and seriousness of working in an institution where

security is of the utmost importance, might dissuade teachers from ever focusing on individual students and his or her learning. A teacher often wonders, "Is he telling me the truth about himself? Is he trying to con me? Should I tell an officer about this action? Should I write up this disciplinary problem and add time to his sentence." My co-workers in corrections have often advised me to be tougher on the students. They were elated when I wrote my first infraction for an inmate's inappropriate behavior.

> They are inmates first and students second. I have to remind myself of this. - Q.S.

What are the alternatives to passive acquiescence toward this way of seeing education as mainly, or solely, for the purposes of keeping idle inmates busy? The education staff, often the teachers, have the political task of being the liaison between their programs and the administration. The onus is often on the teacher to communicate education-related topics with corrections employees. If done diplomatically, this inclusion will help ally staff to the education department. Corrections staff must be involved at decision making at all levels. It is in this way, that trust, shared knowledge, good working relationships, and also shared attitudes on education can be developed. To a large degree, the corrections teacher will be the contract "visitor" who must explain, counsel, and talk with corrections employees. This is the case especially in smaller institutions where there are smaller numbers of education staff.

> Being told the real agenda of the eduation department would have been helpful when I started working here. - L.R.

Superintendents also stated that they sometimes feel other corrections staff undervalued education. These responses selected from thirteen

Washington state prison superintendents illustrate this perception: "Unfortunately, there is sometimes a mind set in corrections that devalues education." "There always seems to be some staff resentment for inmates getting a 'free' education. Also, school is viewed by some as a dodge to avoid work." "You will find staff that feel inmates should not receive the level of education offered at this facility," (Sweeney, 2). In these perceptions of other prison staff attitudes toward prison education, we can see the great difference in education support between the school in a prison and the school in the community. On the way home from work one day, a prison counselor told me, that "education is first, a way for inmates to earn 'good time' [time off of their sentence], and is second, a way for them to improve their skills" (Paup, 1995). I cannot count how many times this phrase has been stated directly and indirectly to me. The underlying message then becomes to the teacher, "your mission as a teacher, unimportant."

It is likely that education staff will pick up on these beliefs, however few or numerous, from line staff and from administration. It is up to the strength of beliefs of the individual teacher not to internalize these beliefs and guide the practices of the school. There is a fine, yet definite line between the school and the prison. Physically it exists within the prison, but philosophically, the education program and its teachers can have independent beliefs, assumptions, and goals. This is the paradox of working as an educator within prison walls.

Another paradox lies in teacher supervision. As a teacher, one is encouraged to be tougher on students -- exert institutional authority. Yet, a teacher is given much freedom concerning how instruction takes place, and often, what subjects are taught. Although the specific rules for teachers' class *activities* are often non-existent, we could be reprimanded if we "go too far" in choosing a class activity. For example, a unit on Civil Rights was taken out of the

curriculum because, the supervisor argued, it could have incited a riot. It is this state of unknowing and the*possibility* of conflict between the administration and the teacher that can cause stress to the educational worker. When forming a class activity the teacher must secondguess the content and the delivery.

> I found myself trying less innovative projects than I had previously anticipated. I had to play the "GED game." - M.L.

> Fully understand the policies and procedures and if in doubt, ask your immediate supervisor for advice. - N.D.

In addition to this potential conflict of an administration's and an educator's goals, there is the decision of the *types of classes* that should exist in a corrections environment. In all of Washington state prisons, basic skills classes dominate the education programs. Indeed, it was recommended in a statewide survey to prison superintendents, and by Chase Riveland, Secretary of Prisons, that basic skills classes (which include English as a Second Language) should be the *primary* program offered at educational sites in adult prisons (Riveland 1994). This belief supports a trend that shies away from "college academic" classes, A.A. and B.A. degrees, and other classes which tax payers are critically scrutinizing recently (Merriam, 359).

While visiting the Washington Corrections Center outside Shelton, Washington, I met "Doc," a prison educator so-named for his Doctorate. I asked him to define how he saw his role in the prison classroom. He immediately addressed a different question which was on his mind -- defending his Associate of the Arts degree program. He teaches "tolerance," as he puts it. On paper, he teaches History of Multicultural America - Humanities 250, English Literature, Poetry, and a smattering of other Liberal Arts classes. Why is he on the

defensive? He says that he is under the gun by people who want to eliminate his program because of its "high" standards. Some of the complaints: Why are we offering criminals a higher education FOR FREE!? Why are you offering pansy classes that won't help them find a job when they are released? Doc says, "au contraire!" He says that he teaches people to live vicariously through others, thus teaching empathy, goodwill, and understanding (Clare 1994).

He believes that these inmates in the past have been destructive, narcissistic, and selfish. This is why they committed their crimes. He tries to teach them the joys and pains of other people's struggles and lives through the mediums of literature and history, so that they may think twice before harming or taking again. In his article "Humanities Incarcerated," Doc writes,

> In the humanities, there is an inherent ability to heal. Humanities, in a prison setting, is an effective treatment for callused minds. Somewhere, the humanities teaches that we must never violate the dignity of another human being. We are engaged in creating better human beings, not better accountants. 'Pornography' I heard my senior student point out, 'only appeals to the animal man. Good reading can give you your mind,' (Clare 1989).

It will be increasingly difficult for Mr. Clare and others like him to justify their college literature and history courses as the public's dissatisfaction with criminals, the justice system, and the penal system grows. Unfortunately, arguments such as Doc's are often only heard within the confines of the prison walls or in adult education journals.

The Effect of Being an Off-Campus Community College Site

In Washington state, the overall education program is staffed by annually renewed contract employees of community colleges. As corrections educators, we want to believe that we are equal to, as good as, "mainstream" education on campus. This undermines the notion that "different" can be good. The reality is

that we have a different context, different students, and at times, different time frames for our goals. Since these differences exist, corrections education programs and their on-campus step-parent programs cannot really be compared accurately. For the purposes of this paper, I discuss the on-campus programs only in their effect on the attitudes of corrections educators. It is established, however, that corrections programs are shying away from the "academic" (100 level+) programs, as the budget ax falls and as the public's cynicism grows.

> My role as "record keeper" has increased to one hour out of six. Because of this, there is less time for curriculum development. Even though the education administration's response to our class makes me want to do the minimum at work, I still can't stop caring. -S.D.

Being an off-campus extension of a community college can have its advantages and disadvantages, depending upon the college, the prison's education program and its size, and the relationship between the campus and the off-campus (prison) program. To varying degrees depending upon the three factors mentioned above, the positive effects can be described. First, there is usually increased independence, as the Dean is often located on the main campus of the college and decisions are often made at the site-level. Teachers and administrators can play more of an active, decision-making role concerning their site's educational program. Faculty meetings are smaller than on campus and the needs pertain to a smaller, and more manageable program.

With this increase in responsibility, however, comes an increase in consequences and risk. Communication can be a problem with the main campus, if it is not aggressively sought. Thus, if a decision is made prematurely and it is considered a *bad* decision, then heads may roll.

The separation between campus and off-campus programs also means that political scuffles may generally stop at the physical boundary of the

institution. For example, while Peninsula College's president received a vote of "no confidence" from the board of overseers and the campus was in turmoil, Peninsula College employees at the prison were somewhat immune to the controversy. It hurt the overall image of the college in the public's eye, but did not impact the immediate program in the prison.

> Many teacher resources are available for use in prison. The difficulty is found in locating, requesting and receiving these materials. - N.D.

Depending upon the size of the education program, there are not as many student and teacher resources for the prison education program as there are for campus programs. College level credit courses, computers, library resources, and staff development are in shorter supply in prison education programs.

Training

Similar to prisoners, new teachers in corrections do not consistently receive much training concerning interpersonal skills, delivery, or emotional "survival." Some teachers are given books with scare tactics to put them "on guard" and to ensure they do not break prison rules or put themselves, their jobs in jeopardy. The information new teachers receive is not comprehensive. It omits a crucial aspect of the teaching environment: relationships. Relationships that are formed as support from other teachers in prison and the relationships that exist within the teacher's classroom.

> For training, I saw a video called, "Put the Hook In." It was about con manipulation. Luckily, I also was placed with an experience teacher, who taught me many important aspects of teaching in a prison setting. - R.J.

Another difference between community college programs in prisons and those on the main campus, is that the prison educator can have a diminished image as a professional in the community. Prison faculty contract rules seem to substantiate this in addition to results from my interviews with instructors state-wide. While on-campus professors are eligible for tenure, many prison-site professors are not. It is a tradeoff in many senses to work in an off-campus setting. One receives independence and more reliance on the immediate prison community in trade for fewer resources and sometimes, support.

The Effects of the Prison's Security Emphasis on the Teacher and on the Education Program

> Learners are closed and reluctant to participate in a maximum security environment. They carry a lot of anger. They need to have their learning highly structured. If it isn't, then they are uncomfortable. Students are not so open and sharing. Everyone is watching each other in a learning lab of about 50 students. - M.L.

In addition to affecting the overall attitude and focus of the teacher in a prison, the omnipresent emphasis on security and the daily routines of the prison also affect day to day occurrences in the classroom. Washington state teachers in prison mentioned a variety of factors which affected their particular class or program. There are the frequent physical "counts" that take place. An officer enters a classroom and asks students for their names and living units, while checking them off of a sheet. Sometimes the interruptions are more disruptive, sometimes they are less disruptive.

Again, for purposes of maintaining security, and also because the prison system is overloaded with inmates, teachers and students do not know *when* they will be transferred to another institution. This means that students cannot

complete programs of study, or "tracks." Teachers should be mentally prepared to meet new students who express anger toward the prison, because they were transferred with little notice and without explanation. Unfortunately, not all institutions deliver the same classes. It is therefore likely that an inmate will not finish a certain program of study, once he is moved.

Because of this fairly constant movement of prisoners from institution to institution, teachers must keep extra school and attendance records on an individual student. One recommendation to teachers is to implement a portfolio assessment and record keeping system where the student keeps a copy of his own records. That way, if the student "disappears" over the weekend, he will be prepared to present himself and his education history to a teacher in a new location.

Another practical factor of the prison classroom is realia. Teachers cannot bring certain objects to class. For example, one teacher related that she did not bring in newspapers or any current news materials as she said it might have given the student information pertaining to his case, his gang, or his predicament. Another teacher is reluctant to bring dice in to the institution, because they can be easily "lifted" and used for illegal gambling within the institution.

Anything with a teacher's personal address or information is not to be shared with students. One teacher in the state penitentiary quickly ripped her name and address from sixteen clothes catalogs while the students were working on an assignment with the same catalogs. How did the students feel about this? Did they feel a lack of trust on the part of the teacher, or did they just realize that she was properly working under prison dictates of security? How did the teacher feel about the need to do this in the middle of a language activity?

With this withholding of personal information, such as a teacher's address in this example, comes the daily reminder not to disclose personal information while talking with students. An article written in Washington State's Adult Education Office, "Maintaining 'Professional Distance': A Dilemma for the ABE Teacher" states a commonly-held belief about prison instructors:

> [The] counselor does not become the student's friend...Avoid becoming involved in the personal problems of adult students, (Willing, 6).

This belief warns teachers to maintain an appropriate ("professional") distance with students. Not only are teachers opening up a volcano in sharing personal information, it is argued, teachers are endangering themselves and possible, offering bad advice.

It seems that there are many "enforcers" of safety out there inside and outside the prisons. That is, the public is fairly uncomfortable with inmates, and this sentiment has its effects on both custody staff and educators in the prison. The preponderance of rules concerning safety and appropriateness in comparison to the meager amount of staff training concerning an understanding of one's own limits and paths of communication, illustrates the challenge that faces new corrections teachers. I believe it is unfortunate, and a questionable necessity, that ostensible institution authority dominates educational and therapeutic programs for adults in prison. In this light, teachers are often encouraged to be more authoritative by writing disciplinary infractions and instilling a modicum of fear and distance in their students. It depends on the staff person's individual reaction to this "given" of authority, whether or not substantial learning takes place inside the classroom.

As mentioned in the introduction, the public is often dismayed at wondering *why* one would wish to work in such a difficult atmosphere as a prison. Paradoxically, while many directives, rules, and uses of institutional

authority exist, education programs, and therefore teachers, enjoy the status of "enigma." That is, we often have freer reign to decide how we want to implement programs and teach our students in this secretive environment than do teachers in the public school systems. Unlike the prisoner, rules for how we should teach are scarce, and it is only when we are "caught going too far," that we are warned, reprimanded or punished. It was said that working in a corrections setting would not be easy. That is correct. The process in which one comes to terms with one's social and moral views of humans and with one's behavior and role can be excruciating, though rewarding.

> Paradox 3: If I am committed to respecting people's right to be different, must that respect extend to people who will themselves not tolerate difference? Is it possible to express basic values non-confrontationally? What is a profession if it has no values to profess? - Julian Edge (Edge, 1995).

PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY

In the autobiographical section in chapter two, I discussed how I used "institutional authority" to comply with the prison institution's rules during my first year. I had succeeded in distancing myself from the inmates and had created an air of authority that stayed intact due to my consistent behavior and the inmates belief in the prison system's repurcussions (or threats). My behavior replicated the standard by which prison institutions operate. By attaining this institutional authority, I was then able to look around me for something new. With an examination of my teaching styles, my goals, and myself, was I able to move outside this otherwise limited realm. The last three stages in the "Continuum of Behavior Change" at the end of this chapter, illustrate these changes in greater detail.

> As one may expect, the prisoners often resent authority. At the same time, they have a healthy respect for authority as they know that the professor wield a power over them. - L.O.

Upon temporarily leaving my post at Olympic Correction Center for two summers, I entered into healthy, professional debate with other teachers at graduate school. We discussed the role of the teacher and the learner in the classroom, authority and control, and we discussed new ways for teachers to provide an opportunity and environment in which to learn. For the first

time, I met other teachers who recognized their need to change and were committed to improving their teaching. I began working on "professional authority" instead of "institutional authority."

Professional authority actually encorporates institutional authority, and it is a stepping stone beyond it. It would have been difficult for me not to have experienced the institutional authority, before seeing alternatives. That is, I had to progress through the stages -- my blind acceptance of the existing prison rules of distance, the discomfort, the questioning, then the behavior change -- in order to see the complex nature of my mission as teacher inside the realms of the prison institution. Professional authority means that I, in my capacity as the teacher, feel comfortable in my roles of counselor, referee, questioner, and ultimately, equal human being with my students. My teaching role is not one dictated to me from other corrections staff, but one that I have grown to assume, develop over a period of time, and one that I feel comfortable with for the time being. In my opinion, this is a sûccessful stage for a person who began her job in uncertain and uncomfortable waters.

Today, while I continue to enforce the bottom line of prison and class rules in the classroom (e. g. no swearing, put downs etc.), I have changed how I discuss and attain rules, activities, and teaching methods with the students. Students are involved in making the rules and activities in our classroom, they supply commentary on how these affect the inmates, and they participate in communicating these to new students. They are more invested in the school and its programs and we have a better program overall, due to their participation in decision making.

However, not all is glorious, easy, or simple. With my recent work in a maximum security prison, I have found that not all students are ready for such responsibility. These "institutionalized" students understand the

controller-controllee games of the prison too well and can believe that a teacher who offers students a voice, is just plain weak. In such cases, I have had to return to a stricter code of rules and eventually dismiss an unruly students who habitually undermine activities. Paradoxically, both distance and closeness exist in this teaching role. The teacher decides how much of each she wants in her setting at the time and as each situation demands.

> I see myself as an educator, counselor, discussion leader, and defender of the system (which is sometimes hard to do). - L.R.

Some things have stayed the same during my time here in prison, while other things have changed. As in my first year of teaching at a prison, I still pay attention to my comfort level in regards to interacting with students; however, I have noticed that my comfort level has widened. For example, I feel more comfortable knowing that I can tell a student that I do not want to answer a personal question. I therefore do not ask the students questions that I would not be ready to answer myself. Sometimes, however, it is still difficult to repond in an honest manner with students. I do not always have the answer regarding how I should best respond to a question, especially personal ones.

> As a teacher, I have slowly opened up, developed relationships with them and developed trust. -M.L.

The combination of being a female teacher in an environment where men are in confinement, results in uncomfortable interactions at times. Recently, while working at a Clallam Bay Correction Center (CBCC), a maximum security prison, I was propositioned for a sexual relationship by an inmate. Despite my initial reaction, I responded with what I hoped was

sincerity and firmness, "I am a teacher here. There can be no personal relationships between me and students here." It was my way of saying 'not interested,' through an appeal to this man's knowledge of correction rules (i.e. this is not allowed here, instead of 'I am not interested in you!'). Fortunately, he backed off quickly. With an agreement from me to keep this just to myself, he left.

Situations that involve love interests (or lust interests), occurred occasionally during my nine week sojourn at the maximum security facility of CBCC. Given that I had taken precautions to dress and act sensibly, I probably received less attention than other female staff with whom I worked. Still, these occurrences for me are one of the most difficult and uncomfortable part of my job. I have been told that this confrontation with students' inappropriate actions is "part of the job." Still, I believe that it is an unfortunate and uneasy part for women who work in this environment.

Inside the realm of language learning in the ESL classroom, it is now easier to show uncertainty in front of students. I am now not afraid to show that I just do not know the answer to a specific grammar question. They will come to understand that the teacher is human like they are and that she can make mistakes. They are more likely to venture guesses and take risks in class, because they experience this equality. There is no imposed *perfection* to strive for, only an individual's goals and the common goals of the class.

I am continually inspired by students in my ESL classes, who go above the call for participation. For example, when devising a lesson influenced by the participatory approach, I anticipate a certain reaction from my students. I have drawn a picture on the board and they interpret it. I ask investigative questions, but the discussion takes off on an unanticipated path. More times than not, they surprise me with their ways of learning and taking in

information. Usually, I end up laughing to myself because of the inherent mystery that is involved in crafting a lesson. A teacher never knows how an activity will work.

I can best gauge the space between these authorities -- institutional and professional by returning to a paper I wrote in graduate school for a "Teaching Approaches" class in the summer of 1993. In this class, we first defined what constitutes "learning." How can a teacher tell when learning occurs? After discussing the more elusive mysteries involved in teaching and in learning, we studied and participated in different teaching methodologies. The more participatory methods first threatened my status quo teaching. Yet, later, after much trial, thought and argument, I described in this paper how a change had taken place in my teaching and in myself:

> With each approach, I found several things which challenged how I have conducted my own ESL classes at home [prison.] I am revealing the assumptions I have about myself and my students. I was not really letting my students teach me anything about themselves.....I think that an attitude of respecting the student goes a long way...The challenge for the students is looking at themselves as learners. The challenge for me as a teacher, is creating a trusting environment in the class.

One of the more specific ways that I began to show respect for my students involved using their first names and inviting them to do the same in addressing me. This can have the ancillary effect of inviting risk as well. That is, the style of open communication, feedback, and mutual respect between teacher and student decreases the student's fear and usually increases his or her participation; yet, it can also send the signal of a "weak teacher" or "anything goes" as I discovered a few times at CBCC.

Still, I have found that the objective of learning is primary, so I generally continue with an attitude of openness, equality and respect after getting rid of the bad apples for the time being. Encouraging them to set specific goals for themselves in class, keep track of their progress through journals (or "portfolios"), and giving me regular feedback, all provide an atmosphere of congeniality, interest, and sometimes even disbelief in the language learning classroom. "Is this real teaching?" they seem to be thinking. The students often do not readily see the language learning purposes of activities that are interesting and fun.

I earned a greater self confidence by passing the initial stage of institutional authority and later, by developing behavior that embodied professional authority. My primary focus is now on language learning in the classroom and on fostering a peaceful and secure environment to bring this about. I maintain a mindful eye on the ever-present concerns of prison security and rules, but this does not debilitate my teaching or my conviction to teach my students. It is this ability to weigh and balance these two types of authority that allows me to teach a variety of subjects and to feel that I am doing so in a meaningful way. Like the student who balances a guarded sense of personal privacy in an arena of prison commotion and stress, the corrections teacher walks the philosophical tightrope, maintaining confidence of judgment and ideals, in a strange arena of other agendas.

CONTINUUM OF BEHAVIOR CHANGES*4

1. Aug. 1991 - June 1992
I saw my examples in other prison staff (guards' "institutional authority"). I mimicked this authoritative stance with my students.

I perceived myself to be the most vulnerable at this point. I was new to the prison and felt that I had to assert authority and make distance between my students and me. This is the least risky stage in the continuum.

3. Stage one: Jan. 1993 - Sept. 1993
I realized that I needed more models to base my language teaching on. This included my growing dissatisfaction with my behavior and the overall climate in my classroom. I applied to graduate school (School for International Training).

Stage two: Sept 1993 - Nov. 1993
First summer at SIT. I did not believe that a dramatic change in my existing "institutional authority" was possible. I argued that "I work in a different area. This will not work in a prison!" Wasn't how I was acting before the best, safest way??

5. Sept. 94 - present
I invite students to call me by my first name. I talk to students frankly about class organization. I explain why I do certain activities. I receive regular feedback. I have discovered an invaluable sense of humor in my students that keeps our momentum up. This is a riskier stage, in that the teacher is open to change and to questioning her protocol. Also, some students might mistake this openness as weakness in the teacher. Inappropriate actions might take place. In general, there is more equality and students feel more at ease.

Actively join the behavior | **No response** | **Educate oneself** | **Interrupt the behavior** | **Interrupt and educate** | **Initiate an organized response**

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2. Jan. 1992 - Dec. 1992
After attaining the demeanor of "institutional authority," I observed non-custody staff's behavior (e.g. counselors). Although I observed alternatives, I still did not question the status quo behavior which I exhibited. I was beginning to get uncomfortable with my behavior of distancing and self-protection in the classroom, but I still didn't know if I wanted to or could change.

4. Nov. 1993 - May 1994
Two teacher trainers visited my worksite and challenged me not to ESL teach bilingually. I put away some of my assumptions and tried this new way. I took risks. I also implemented more participatory activities in the classroom. I had interrupted my past pattern of demonstrating "institutional authority." Overall, I showed more flexibility as a teacher than ever before.

6. In my opinion, this last stage, is the most risky in the continuum. It involves taking one's experience of behavioral change and educating a group of people (teachers, administrators, etc.). This person must be patient in helping the people through these stages at their own pace.

*4 The framework of this timeline is from the Univ. of Massachusetts at Amherst, Social Issues Project).

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APPENDIX A

Prison Education History - Where Did Our Current Models of Prison Education Come From?

Education has been involved in United States corrections since the late eighteenth century. First deemed as literary and moral education, education in prisons evolved over time and from region to region in the United States (Wolford, 356). From religious, vocational, moral, and literary components and phases, corrections education has changed according to the trends and desires of society and those at the corrections helm.

A prison reform movement in Elmira, New York, took place in 1870, which for the first time, based prison education programs on a vocational and educational model. By 1931 the Correctional Education Association was established. After World War II, however, a large prison industry program put the increased prison population primarily to national labor use. "Correctional Education" did not emerge again as a serious professional educational issue until the 1970's (Rider-Hankins, 6).

The Adult Education Act in 1966, the Manpower Development Training Act of 1963, and the Basic Education Opportunity Grant Program in 1972 all assisted with expanding correctional educational programs. The passage of the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act in 1985 provided the first mandatory correctional education money through federal legislation, (Wolford, 358).

Throughout the country, participation in education programs for inmates is generally voluntary. Overall, the national average for participating in state prison eduational programs is 30%. However, some institutions have begun mandating further education for those inmates functioning under a specified

grade level. In Federal Prisons, inmates who score below the 6th grade on academic assessment tests, must attend an adult basic education program for 90 calendar days. If they are Spanish-speaking, they may choose to participate in a Spanish literacy class (Edelson, 20).

Theoretical Models - On What Specific Models Do We Base Our Education Programs?

Researchers have outlined three major models for "corrective" education in this century: the Medical (or "Incremental") Model, the Cognitive Deficiency (or "Developmental") Model, and the Opportunities Model (Collins, 104; Rider-Hankins, 10). According to researcher and professor Michael Collins, all of these models contain an authority figure. Each evaluates the student/client and then prescribes a plan for change that focuses on a lack of skill or knowledge. Collins believes that these models view students as "deficient" (why else would *they* be in prison?). Because of this inherent quality of the models, education administrators are doing an injustice to the inmate students.

Corrections teachers and their administrations encorporate pieces of all three basic corrections education models into their practices and their education goals statements. The Opportunities Model keeps inmates busy by employing them in vocational prison industries and preparing them for a better economic future. The Medical Model believes that the individual has a psychological deficiency and that education should rehabilitate individuals through behavior modification. The Developmental model also portends to "rehabilitate" by exposing the individual to the liberal arts, reasoning skills and ethical questions. According to some researchers, this latter model assumes that these individuals are deficient in their moral reasoning and consequently, turned to crime (Collins 105).

The Medical and Cognitive Deficiency models assume that there is *correction* (of a "problem"), that needs to take place in the individual inmate. Essentially, these types of education models simplify criminals and their crimes into single categories, when in fact there are numerous cultures in the prison population. For example, the ESL inmates represent other cultures and possibly different motivations for committing a crime. The risk of considering all inmate-students under one umbrella, or "treatment," is great.

Another problem with the models, when taken in their pure and absolute forms, is the promise to "rehabilitate," and "correct" the prisoner. Here, the models can set themselves up for failure. First, "rehabilitation" implies (and strives toward) making the inmate/student more like the average law-abiding citizen, and thus, ensure staying out of prison. A lower rate of recidivism for prisoners is complicated and difficult to "prove." When administrators make promises like lowering the recidivism rate through education, it can backfire against funding our education programs as crime and incarceration rates skyrocket.

Another danger in this promise lies in the fact that education and prison administrators have underestimated more complex cultural differences in the diverse make up of the prison population. Poverty, drug addiction, economic opportunism, discrimination, mental illness, and more, are all factors which can affect and precipitate illegal behavior. For example, an English student from Mexico might not see anything *illicit* with selling drugs in the U.S. He could see his action as a lucrative way to earn a living for his family. Can we classify all criminals in the same category when we promise to rehabilitate or correct them? Indeed, should we even *try* to "rehabilitate", or make these prisoners behave and live as we do?

While education programs do help control aggressive behavior inside the prison as well as give some inmates a good chance at improving basic skills or learning a trade, "rehabilitating the criminal mind" in the ethical sense of the phrase is a much more complicated, if not futile, assignment. The public wants a better return on its money: lower recidivism rates. Yet, an increasing prison population throughout the country contributes to tax-payers dissatisfaction with giving "free" education and training to prisoners.

From Theory to Practice - How Do Instructional Methods Mesh With Prison Institutions' Realities? Can the Teachers and Their Methods Make a Difference in Their Students?

Many prison educators and researchers have beliefs that go unheard on the legislative floor where the corrections education decisions are made. For practical and political reasons, the arguments listed in this paper from professionals who work in the field of corrections education usually stay in the two-dimensional paper-and-ink realm. That is, if correction education insiders were to powerfully voice their observations and beliefs, many changes would have to occur to instigate a new type of "rehabilitation" in our prisons. This challenging of the status quo can be seen as dangerous by many prison and education administrators.

Some researchers argue that present corrections education and these three models are nothing but a bandaid solution to a cover a question that the public is really afraid to face. That question is: Can we or should we even try to correct these individuals? Then the question can imply a greater question to our entire community: Is it a shortcoming in society, the individual, or both, that the U.S. imprisons a greater percentage of its population than any other first world nation? Collins believes that the culture of the prison is radically and essentially, an "ever watchful, distrustful environment, designed to individuate and control

its population, infiltrate the entire educational endeavor " (Collins, 102). This may imply that the *nature* of the prison itself, reinforces criminal behavior both inside and outside the prison walls. To what extent is the distrusting, fearful eye of the tower guard a reflection of our leaders in the public community?

He views the entire "Institution" of the prison, as one of *panopticism*, a term borrowed from French philosopher, Michel Foucault. Panopticism is the reality of modern western prisons, where a guard can look out upon the prisoners from his center station. He never has to interact or be seen, but he can see the prisoners and can therefore control them. It is a warped sense of reality that inflicts disassociation, disenfranchisement, and isolation into the prisoner's world.

Is education in prisons really like this? To what extent can education be a Mecca away from the grind and panopticism of the prison? Or, is it just a little sister, a helping hand, of big brother prison? It depends on whom you ask, the environment of a particular prison, and the disposition of the staff who work there. Each corrections instructor must have the training to make the decisions related to pedagogy. What works for Mr. Rogers might not work for another teacher. Collins suggests using methods in the prison classroom such as Paolo Freire's Participatory Approach, which would allow for "freer" self-actualizing education. This is a useful, radical, and creative pedagogy for *some* instructors.

Because of the sensitive security nature of the prison and the unnatural conditions of its inmates, an instructor's own personal caution and decision making dictates whether or not a specific approach to teaching is best. Considerations such as a teacher's personal investment and disclosure, the climate and security level of the prison, the education and prison administration, and the trust between students and teacher are all crucial factors in determining how an instructor will interact with students. For a teacher to work freely as an

educator within the lock-step routine and from the control and security measures of the prison, he or she must have some prison teaching experience, professional apprenticeship and guidance, and an awareness of personal boundaries and comfort levels.

Varying Goals - How Do Administrations, Professional Organizations and Teachers Differ in Their Understanding of Correction Education Goals?

The goals of correctional education according to the Correctional Educational Association, reflect a moralistic and broad range of educational and behavioral items that reinforce the smooth operation of the prison institution: education is part and parcel of the smooth, non-disruptive, operation of the prison as a whole. Their mission is to "interrupt nonsocial or antisocial behavior through vocational and academic learning activities...to equip students or lives as responsible community members" (Gehring, 138).

According to the Correctional Education Association, six commonly accepted goals exist for all correctional education programs are outlined although the programs and goals vary from institution to institution (Wolford, 358). These are:

1. To provide inmates with basic academic and vocational skills;
2. to provide inmates with an opportunity to change their personal behavior and values;
3. to reduce recidivism;
4. to provide passive control of inmate behavior;
5. to support the operational needs of the correctional institution;
6. and to provide institutional work assignments.

From controlling inmate behavior and thereby decreasing the tension and violence in the institution, to increasing their academic and vocational knowledge for a better chance "on the outside," correctional education attempts to serve a variety of self-serving as well as rehabilatative purposes. These goals meld nicely with those of insitution administrators. Indeed, it could be argued that these education goals were constructed for the effect of reassuring prison administrators.

Pieces of these goals come from all three educational models which seek to re-direct inmate behavior in the prison. Since it is the prison's primary objective to protect society from the prisoners by keeping the prisoners incarcerated, as well as protecting the prisoners *from themselves* (i.e. preventing fist fights, murders), behavior modification is a popular goal in correctional education.

Beyond these goals which also support the prison institution, various studies show that teachers see education in this slightly different light (Rider-Hankins, 6):

1. an antidote to adopting the prison culture, by raising self-esteem and achievement levels;

2. curriculum to promote appropriate socially-oriented thinking patterns;

3. stimulation of students with collaborative work habits and projects;

4. and assistance to students in setting realistic goals with regards to vocation and family life.

Although these teachers' goals can also be viewed within the lenses of the three models, they tend to focus more on options for the students than ostensible control of the inmates. Realistically, there is an overlap as well as a difference between the teachers' and the prison administrators' educational philosophies.

Whereas the administrators' philosophies may tend to reflect the larger prison institution and its safety, the instructors' philsophies reflect the acknowledgment of an inmate's individual educational goals both now and after his release from prison. In other words, the teachers' goals focus on the student as individual, whereas the CEA goals focus on the well being of the institution and *successful* social rehabilitation of the inmate.

If differences in goals exist between the instructor and the administration, so exists a lack of professional support for an instructor's instructional methodology if it is seen as contrary to the safety of the institution. In theory, most of us can reasonably accept that the institution must provide a safe and secure environment in prison. And thus, an instructor's class and instruction is secondary to this one aim. However, there is great variance in opinion and in administration's decision making. That is, part of the nature of the prison operation, is hierarchical: the Superintendent has final say on all questions. Beneath this position, are the other mililitary ranks (sergeant, officer, lieutenant, etc). A teacher may not be sure, therefore, if her activity is controversial or not. An ongoing question persists in the teacher's mind as to whether or not a decision is "right" or "wrong," according to the administration.

For example, an administrator who sees the education program as supporting the prison routine of security and consistently controlled inmate behavior, might not allow an instructor to teach with the Participatory Approach. This approach might unleash the anger and frustration of the students, thus, upsetting the controlled, question-free air of the prison institution. Because of the possibility of conflict between instructor and administration, teachers should discuss teaching plans with other instructors and with the administrator in an open manner. Ultimately the power to say "yes" or "no" indiscriminately to the activities and methodologies of an instructor's classroom lies with prison

administration. An upfront, direct question to a teacher's administrator might curtail the teacher's original lesson plan, but it will also save their bacon, if questions are later asked regarding appropriateness or security.

APPENDIX B

Teacher Questionnaire

In a survey that I delivered to teachers in Washington state prisons, I asked several questions. To the question, "What interested you in teaching in a prison?" most respondents replied that working in a prison was purely accidental. One respondent said that he was inspired by Paolo Freire's text, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, which connected literacy with students helping themselves out of a marginalized position in society.

To the question, "What conditions of the prison most affect your classroom?" teachers commented on students' lower levels of education, their smaller vision of their world (possibly as a result of residing in confinement), custody's restrictive influence on classes and students, and the social pecking order of the students.

To the question, "How would you describe your role in the classroom?" teachers mainly saw themselves as facilitators, resource people, and also as role models. The teachers interviewed seemed aware of the dynamics of authority, teacher-centeredness, and student-centeredness.

To the questions, "How have your role and behavior changed since you began working in the prison?" many interesting responses were given. Teachers said that when they first started teaching in the prison, they saw themselves as the fountain of all knowledge, disseminators of THE information. As time went on, many instructors learned that a more student-centered approach was more effective.

To the question, "What teacher resources were available to you when you first started working in a prison?" teachers agreed with each other. Many teachers said that their fellow corrections teachers were their best assets.

Below, is the questionnaire that I delivered to the prisons that I visited, the conferences that I attended, and the telephone interviews that I conducted. Although the responses did not include all teachers, I believe that the respondents represent a fair sampling from prisons state-wide and of varying security levels.

Interview Questions

1. What interests(ed) you in teaching in a prison, or was it accidental?
2. How long have you taught in a prison?
3. What conditions of the prison most affect your classroom? How you teach? How students learn?
4. How would you describe your role in the classroom?
5. Has your concept of your role changed since you first arrived at the prison? If so, how?
6. Has your interaction/behavior with students changed since you first arrived at the prison? If so, how?
7. What teacher resources have you used since you've taught at the prison? What was available to you when you first started working in a prison? What would have helped you adjust to your new work situation?
8. What advice would you give to teachers new to corrections?

Name: _____ Date: _____

THE END. Thank you very much.

APPENDIX C

Washington Core Competencies

Level 1A

Highline Community College		WA ESL Core Competencies	Level 1-A	
		Date/Week		Student Name
Listen and Observe	1.00	Oral Directions; Supporting Cues		
		1.1 follow simple directions		
		1.2 respond to body language, gestures/facial cues (yes/no)		
	2.00	English Sound-Symbol Correspondence		
		2.1 consonants vs. written symbol		
		2.2 initial, medial, and final sound of consonants		
		2.3 vowels vs. consonants		
		2.4 short vowel sounds in familiar vocabulary		
	3.00	Statements vs. Questions (grammatical structure/intonat.)		
		3.1 statements vs. questions		
	4.00	Vocabulary of Basic Needs and Wants		
		4.1 identify basic needs and wants		
Speak	1.00	Verbal/Non-verbal Behavior for Immediate Needs		
		1.1 state a basic need or want		
		1.2 use non-verbal behavior to communicate needs		
	2.00	Respond to Questions about Immediate Situation		
		2.1 answer information quests. about personal information		
		2.2 respond to yes/no questions about immediate situation		
	3.00	Pronounce English Sounds Understandably		
		3.1 regular consonant sounds		
		3.2 short vowel sounds in single syllabic words		
	4.00	Basic Vocabulary to Describe Environment/Situation		
		4.1 objects in the environment in short statements		
		4.2 report an activity or facts about a situation		
Read	1.00	Recognize Most Standard Words on Personal Inform. Forms		Instructor Name
		1.1 extract information from words on personal info. forms		
	2.00	Read Times and Dates, Including Clock Time		
		2.1 tell time on a clock face and digital readout		
		2.2 dates		
	3.00	Alphabetical and Numerical Order		
		3.1 sort items in numerical order		
		3.2 sort items in alphabetical order		
	4.00	Read Simple Words, Phrases		
		4.1 basic phonic rules to sound out simple words		
		4.2 identify sight words in the immediate environment		
Write	1.00	Print Upper and Lower Case Letters/Numbers		
		1.1 print upper and lower case letters		
		1.2 write numbers		
	2.00	Copy Information onto Simple Forms		
		2.1 copy personal information onto a simple form		
Compu-tation	1.00	Value of Basic Currency, Coins, and Change		Quarter Year
		1.1 count currency and coins		
		1.2 make change correctly		
	2.00	Count by 1's, 5's, and 10's to 100		
		2.1 Count by 1's, 5's, and 10's to 100		
	3.00	Addition and Subtraction		
		3.1 addition		
		3.2 subtraction		

X = practiced XX = level completed

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Level 3

Highline Community College		WA ESL Core Competencies	Level III	
		Date/Week		Student Name
Listen and Observe	1.00	Process information from different oral sources		
		1.1 follow instructions given orally		
		1.2 recognize import. information in oral announcements/reports		
	2.00	Determine topic from conversations between native speakers		
		2.1 identify the main topic(s) from conversations		
	3.00	Understand patterns of reduced speech and linked words		
		3.1 identify patterns of reduced speech/linked words(hafta)		
	4.00	Understand common idioms and two-word verbs		
		4.1 identify the meaning of frequently-used idioms/verbs		
	5.00	Recognize nonverbal cues (body language, eye contact, etc.)		
		5.1 identify the message given by nonverbal cues		
	6.00	Interpret suprasegmental inf. (intonat.) in situations: i.e. anger		
		6.1 interpret the inferred meaning of a spoken message		
	7.00	Understand advanced negative statements/questions		
		7.1 understand advanced negative statements		
		7.2 understand negative questions (tag, double neg)		
Speak	1.00	Summarize orally/clarify inf. from instructions, announcements		Instructor Name
		1.1 clarify inf. from instructions, announcemts, phone		
		1.2 summarize tha basic inf. from instructions, etc.		
	2.00	Discuss personal/employmt. background in settings		
		2.1 provide an accurate personal history for different situations		
	3.00	State and give reasons for dissatisfaction through channels		
		3.1 make an oral complaint/reasons for dissatisfaction		
	4.00	Discuss and exchange opinions on topic; persuade someone		
		4.1 state a persuasive opinion about a given topic		
		4.2 make persuasive statements; try to arouse interest		
	5.00	Explain the steps in a process		
		5.1 state the steps in a process		
	6.00	Initiate, maintain, terminate conversations or discussions		
		6.1 begin a conversation, continue it, politely end it		
		6.2 apply conversation techniques in a dialogue or discussion		
	7.00	Explain reasons for personal decisions (school, work, family)		Quarter/ Year
		7.1 clearly state the reasons for personal decisions		
		7.2 clearly state reasons when asking for permision		
	8.00	Respond appropriately to negative questions		
		8.1 respond to a negative question correctly		
	9.00	Use appropriate stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns		
		9.1 apply appropriate stress, etc. in words, phrases, statements		
X = practiced		XX = level completed		

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Highline Community College	WA ESL Core Competencies			Level III page 2
Student Name			Date/Week	
	Read	1.00	Look up inf. from printed resource material (phone book, ads)	
			1.1 locate informat. in different types of printed resources	
		2.00	Skim reading material for main idea; scan for detail	
			2.1 skim reading for main idea and scan for detail	
		3.00	Determine meaning/pronunciat./spelling with Eng. dictionary	
			3.1 find meaning/pronunciation of words in Eng.- Eng. dictionary	
			3.2 verify the spelling of a word with an Eng.- Eng. dictionary	
		4.00	Locate, with help, materials in catalogs, microfiche, files	
			4.1 locate materials in catalogs, microfiche, files	
		5.00	Recognize word meaning from common roots, prefixes, suffixes	
			5.1 identify basic word meaning from common roots	
			5.2 identify basic word meaning from common prefixes, suffixes	
		6.00	Determine meaning using contextual clues	
			6.1 identify the appropriate meaning by using context clues	
		7.00	Read and understand directions	
			7.1 follow directions from written materials	
		8.00	Make inferences from sentences or simple paragraphs	
			8.1 separate fact from opinion in written materials	
			8.2 draw conclusions from written materials	
			8.3 predict the outcome of a situation from written material	
		9.00	Synthesize inf. from sources: ads, articles, instructions, etc.	
			9.1 synthesize inf. from sources to make plans, decisions, etc.	
		10.00	Read and interpret diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps	
			10.1 extract information from simple graphs/charts/maps	
		11.00	Read Roman numerals and other non-Arabic symbols	
Instructor Name			11.1 recognize the numeric value of Roman numerals	
			11.2 recognize the meaning of common symbols in readings	
	Write	1.00	Take notes/summarize inf. from written or oral sources	
			1.1 take notes from a variety of sources: phone, video, etc.	
			1.2 write a summary based on written/oral sources	
		2.00	Write a brief letter or message related to school, work, etc.	
			2.1 write an informal letter/message for a circumstance	
			2.2 write a brief formal letter: thank you, complaint, etc.	
		3.00	Write personal/employmt. information using forms, resumes, let	
			3.1 write personal information: formal (business letter), or informal	
			3.2 write employment inf. on a form or in a resume	
		4.00	Produce compound/complex sentences; include unreal conds.	
			4.1 write and punctuate compound and complex sentences	
			4.2 use the conditional tense in writing compound/complex	
		5.00	Learn to take a written test	
			5.1 complete a test in writing	
		6.00	Write a simple paragraph with a topic sentence	
			6.1 write a simple paragraph based on a topic sentence	
		7.00	Use prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc. to increase active vocabulary	
			7.1 appropriately use parts of speech of vocabulary in writing	
		8.00	Apply knowledge of basic spelling rules	
			8.1 apply basic spelling rules: i before e; final f; change ie to y	
			8.2 identify and correctly spell common homonyms	
Quarter/ Year	Compu-tation	1.00	Keep a running total of expenditures	
			1.1 balance a list of expenditures with personal income	
		2.00	Understand terms for decimals, fractions, percentages	
			2.1 use the correct terms with decimals, fractions, and percents	
		3.00	Understand and use the American measuring system	
			3.1 extract inf. from a thermometer (Fahrenheit, scale, liquid)	
			3.2 measure a place, object, or person accurately	
			3.3 calculate volume, area, perimeter, circumference, etc.	
	X = practiced		XX = level completed	

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